

e. Action 13.2 - Sea Disposal Programme - Action Complete

A programme and network for the preparation for sea disposal was issued on 20 January 1989 (Reference D/DGSR(SM)/131/1/9); no objections had been raised.

f. Action 13.3 - SM511 Report of BMT Work - Action Complete

Reference: LM D/SSC/SM511/870/1/1401 dated 5 December 1988.

g. Action 13.4 - Inspection of Salvage Bags - Action Complete

The salvage bags produced by Hoyle Marine had been inspected by DMS(N), NA112 and SM511 and had been found to be suitable for use in a sea disposal operation.

3. Political Developments

The Chairman briefed the Working Group on the recent meetings that had been held in Whitehall to discuss the disposal of nuclear submarines.

a. Meeting of 31 January with Secretary of State and Min(DP)

This meeting had been held to discuss Min(DP)'s minute of 11 January which covered a draft memorandum for 'H' Committee on the way ahead. The discussion had been summarised in the PS/S of S letter of 2 February (Reference MO 18L), the main points being:

(1) Sea disposal remained the preferred option, however, it was recognised that sea disposal would require the most 'careful handling' due to the international and US sensitivities. It was agreed both that a sea disposal operation in 1989 was not feasible (ie the weather window could not be met) and that no further work should be done on sea disposal for the time being.

(2) CSA had suggested that decommissioned nuclear submarines with their reactors encased in concrete, could be put on the sea bed, within UK territorial waters (at depths not less than 200 m to avoid recreational divers); and maybe recovered later when the NIREX waste centre was available. Such a scheme might lessen the international and US objections.

(3) In the discussion, two other options were identified:

(a) Cutting up the reactors, into small pieces, by remote means.

(b) Storing the reactors, intact or in pieces, alongside civil nuclear reactors.

(4) Secretary of State requested that the feasibility of the above three 'new' options be examined and the outcome reflected in a revised draft paper for 'H' Committee. He wished to be able to demonstrate that every reasonable effort had been made to address the problem.

b. Meeting Chaired by Head of Sec(FS) on 9 February

This meeting had been called to discuss the way ahead following the 31 January meeting. It was agreed that no further work on piecemeal disposal was necessary and Sec(FS)/A and ADSc(Nuc)1 had agreed to investigate the feasibility of storage alongside civil nuclear reactors.